

Pacific

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when he proposes marriage.

"Nellie is kind of ditzy, very naive, unsure of herself. She thinks everything is one big adventure," said Merenda, a Canton resident and sophomore at Plymouth Salem High School. Merenda loves the story line and the Rodgers and Hammerstein music. She has to otherwise where would she find the energy to join the Plymouth Theatre Guild east four nights a week after leaving rehearsals for the *Sound of Music* at the high school.

"Emilio DeBeque is an older man," said Merenda who began acting at age 8 with the Whistle Stop Players at the Plymouth Community Arts Council. "She has to overcome her prejudice when she finds out he has two children by a Filipino woman."

She grows beyond the Little Rock background where she's come from."

A lot of work

Dedication like Merenda's is one of the key ingredients in producing a successful show.

"It's a lot of work; musicals take a lot of time. In the first act alone there's 13 scenes," said assistant director Dennis Hubel of Plymouth. "I've been involved with everything including set construction. It's the way people pitch in from advertising the production to sound. It's the talent in front of and behind the scenes."

Kerry Plague is one of those talents. The Canton resident, who plays Emilio DeBeque, was a late bloomer. He first went on stage at age 41 because his son

was in a production at Henry Ford Community College in Dearborn, and "they needed males." Since then Plague's worked with the Avon Players in Rochester Hills. He's also been in the Michigan Opera Theatre's productions of *Tosca* and *La Boheme*.

Emotional

"DeBeque is very emotional and introverted but when he commits, he commits with all his heart," said Plague, who sings *Some Enchanted Evening*, one of the most popular songs in the show.

"I like the musical because the songs are spread out among many principals. The barre is high so it helps me improve. I can't wait for opening night. I hope to break a leg."

Genesis

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ceeds from each show to a designated charity. *Our Town* will benefit the American Cancer Society.

Their first production, *Godspell*, presented in September and October, was a success. "We had a sell-out on three nights. I just couldn't believe it," said Pearson. "The support from the community has just been overwhelming. Even the business community has opened up their arms to us."

St. Kenneth Catholic Church offered its social hall as a performance space. Pastor, the Rev. Joe Mallia, makes a cameo appearance in *Our Town* as Professor Willard.

Butler, who like Landry is a parishioner of St. Kenneth's, hasn't been on stage for 47

years. "I knew Marlene and saw a small article in the church paper that they were casting 'Our Town' and looking for people," he said. "I was familiar with 'Our Town,' and interested in trying out. It's been a real experience. The troupe is wonderful. Many of us came in as strangers, now we're family."

Teaching

Pearson smiles as Ritter talks, and says "that's what we hope happens with every show. One of the things we want to do is teach and give people the benefit of the skills we've acquired over the years. To see them bloom is such a beautiful thing. It's very rewarding. It's a joy to see people interested in theater become involved in it."

Ritter, like other cast members, got interested in theater after performing in a high school play.

"I've always enjoyed theater as a member of the audience, but in the back of my mind always wanted to be on stage," he said.

Landry, who directs the show, was cast as Emily, one of the leading characters, in her high school production of *Our Town*.

"It's a lot of fun stepping on the other side and seeing it happen," said Landry. "It's a timeless story about daily life, and important things like marriage. It teaches us that life is very precious, and that we should stop and examine the simple things, because these are the things that we take for granted."

Honeck

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tra in fall 2000. "You have to research because the message is so important, if people would be touched by it. If the translation in one part says 'my face gets red,' the color in the string section must be red. If he'd said 'my face turns red,' the strings must not be flat. Even though they don't understand Latin words, they feel the music."

It's that attention to detail that has made the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra perform *Verdi's Requiem* so powerful over the years. Formed in 1936 as a European radio orchestra, the ensemble has been led by accomplished conductors such as Sergiu Celibidache and Esa-Pekka Salonen, who attracted the attention of a world audience through his strong commitment to new music. Before long, musicians like Igor Stravinsky and Mstislav Rostropovich were eager to work with the orchestra.

Today, all of the concerts are still heard on radio including the performances in Dublin and New York.

"My goal is to make the

orchestra sounding like what I have in my ears," said Honeck who began playing violin at age 7. Honeck grew up with eight siblings who all played instruments. He decided to become a conductor at age 15 after hearing the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra at a New Year concert. Since studying at the Academy of Music in Vienna, Honeck's led the Zurich Opera and the MDR Symphony Orchestra in Leipzig, and guest conductor of the Dresden Staatskapelle, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Chicago and Houston Symphony orchestras, and the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. He is also principal guest conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra.

High standards

"From a technical side, I want to make sure that they keep high standards but go more into details and get the colors out and the message be clear."

Honeck also wants to continue performing with the Swedish Radio Choir which was founded in the 1920s. Under conductor Eric Ericson, the 33-member

choir won international awards. Ericson, who became conductor of the radio choir in 1952, has since retired but continues to make guest appearances.

Ericson's considered a master in the field of choral conducting. He established the Stockholm Chamber Choir (now the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir) in 1945. The group remains his main vehicle for developing the art of a cappella singing.

In addition to the Feb. 16 performance with the orchestra, the Swedish Radio Choir will join with the Eric Ericson Chamber Choir to sing the music of Strauss, Ligeti, Lidholm and Schnittke at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church Saturday, Feb. 17 in Ann Arbor.

"They're a really great choir," said Honeck. "They sang with the Berlin Philharmonic the week before we left on tour. It's a very homogeneous sound and trained by Eric Ericson. He made the sound of Swedish Radio Choir. I'm amazed how it fits in with the sound of the orchestra. It's a clean but full sound. They have power."

GUIDE TO THE MOVIES

National Amusements Showcase Cinemas		Star Theatres		United Artists Theatres		Theatres		Theatres		
<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>	<p>Showtimes 7:00pm, 9:00pm 11:00pm</p> <p>Address 2150 N. Orchard Rd. 248-375-2669</p> <p>Shows <i>Empire's New Hero</i> <i>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</i> <i>The Wedding Planner</i> <i>The Emperor's New Groove</i></p>

Catch the spirit of Mardi Gras

It's carnival time in metro Detroit. If you're tired of staying home, and looking for something fun to do, here are some options.

■ Celebrate the Mardi Gras with the Brazilian Culture Club of Detroit on Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Holiday Inn on Telegraph Road in Southfield.

Began in the 1980s to soothe homesick Brazilians, Carnival has grown into a party that attracts partygoers from all over. The flamboyant, sometimes risqué costumes, the sound of syncopated drum rhythms, and an authentic Brazilian samba band, have earned Detroit's biggest its reputation as one of the largest such festivities outside of Brazil.



Jazzy: Straight Ahead performs Feb. 27, "Fat Tuesday," at Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen Cafe in Detroit's Greektown.

"It's not just for local Brazilians," said Sergio Santos of Canton, the club's secretary. "The public is welcome to attend. If you come, wear comfortable shoes, and be ready to dance for five hours straight. Be ready to see some outlandish costumes as well. There will be prizes for the best costumes."

For more tickets and more information, call (313) 862-7824 or visit www.BCCD.com.

■ The sixth annual Mardi Gras Magic Party to benefit scholarships for students in the College of Arts, Sciences and Letters at the University of Michigan Dearborn, is 8:30-9 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23.

The event at the Hyatt Regency Dearborn features a silent auction, wine tasting, appetizers, and a Mardi Gras music. Prizes will be awarded for best costume, or participants can attend in work attire.

"Our past five years, we've awarded more than \$14,000 in scholarships to deserving liberal arts students," said Susan Godert, alumni officer at UM-Dea-

born. "This alumni group takes great pride in helping students reach their goal of academic excellence."

The alumni affiliate is co-hosting the event with Merchant's Fine Wine in Dearborn. Tickets are \$60 per person. Sponsors who donate \$150, \$250 or \$500 will receive two tickets and special recognition. Tickets are available at Merchant's Fine Wine, 22250 Michigan Ave., Dearborn. For more information, call (313) 438-9198.

■ Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen Cafe in Greektown is presenting a "Fat Tuesday," Masquerade Party 8 p.m. to midnight, Tuesday, Feb. 27.

Local jazz band Straight Ahead will perform, and costumed partygoers will compete for more than \$1,500 in cash and prizes. The celebration includes a New Orleans buffet, and "Crustacean Station," featuring fresh crawfish and oysters.

The cover charge is \$10 per person, no charge if you wear a

costume.

■ Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen Cafe is at 400 Monroe St. at Brush in Detroit. Call (313) 965-4600 for details.

■ If you want to visit New Orleans for Mardi Gras, but can't, drive to St. Clair Shores to Jack's Waterfront Restaurant and join the party. Danielle & the Dixie Jazz Cats will be performing New Orleans style jazz and blues at the seventh annual "Mardi Gras" bash, beginning at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 27.

■ The restaurant will be decorated with the official Mardi Gras colors — gold, green and purple. Traditional beads will be given to the ladies, and Doubloons (good luck coins) passed out to all.

There will be prizes for the best costume, and the crowning of a "King Rex."

■ Roll-out crowds are expected, call (810) 445-8080 for reservations and information, Jack's Waterfront Restaurant is off Jefferson, north of Nino Milo Road.

Concert showcases local vocalist

Oakland University will host a special evening with the Pontiac Oakland Symphony, featuring vocalists Caitlin Breen and Felicity Hynes, 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 18 in Varner Recital Hall on the campus in Rochester Hills. Tickets are \$15 adults, \$10 students, call (248) 334-8024.

Burke will perform the *Jewel Song* from Charles Gounod's

opera, *Faust*. She is being honored, along with three other student winners in the symphony's annual Competition. Felicity Hynes, a solo vocal or instrumental performance accompanied by an orchestra.

Burke has received numerous honors from the Department of Music, Theatre and Dance at Oakland University, including

the Outstanding Student in Vocal Performance award, the Jennifer Scott Memorial Piano Award and the Outstanding Student in Musical Theatre Award.

She is a senior double majoring in vocal and piano performance, and will be studying in Italy as the recipient of the University's Overseas Award.